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SUBJECT: SUDAN ENVOY INSISTS KHARTOUM READY TO MAKE DEAL

Classified By: Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad for Reasons 1.4 B/D.

11. (C) SUMMARY. Sudanese Special Envoy Ismail told Ambassador Khalilzad on April 18 that Sudanese President Bashir is interested in reaching a package settlement of outstanding issues with the USG and international community that would include a roadmap for resolving Darfur-related issues, mediation of Abyei and other CPA-related issues, removal of Sudan from terrorism and sanctions lists, release of U.S. embassy shipment containers held by Sudanese authorities, and a general normalization of relations. Ambassador Khalilzad replied that U.S. Special Envoy Richardson is fully engaged on these issues and that the USG needs to see Khartoum's commitments result in real changes on the ground, particularly regarding UNAMID deployment. Ismail complained that the USG had promised movement on these and other issues if Sudan cooperated on counterterrorism and signed the CPA; he said Sudan had done its part only to have the USG make new demands. Ambassador Khalilzad explained that developments in Darfur have come to overshadow all other aspects of the U.S.-Sudan relationship and that Khartoum's performance continues to be disappointing on that account. END SUMMARY.

12. (U) Ambassador Khalilzad met with Mustapha Osman Ismail, special envoy to Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, on April 18 at the Sudanese Mission to the United Nations. Ismail was joined by Sudanese PermRep Abdalmahmood Mohamad and Ambassador Yasir Abdelsalam. DepPolCouns also participated.

13. (C) Ambassador Khalilzad put his comments in a context of recent USG messages to Khartoum from Assistant Secretary Frazer and Special Envoy Williamson, explaining that that the U.S. would like to have good relations with Sudan. The Ambassador said Sudan deserves credit for its counterterrorism efforts, but that those efforts were lost in a public perception regarding Darfur and UNAMID that "you dragged your feet in making the deal and are now dragging your feet in implementing it."

Sudan: Anxious to Seem Anxious to Please

14. (C) SE Ismail replied that Colin Powell had assured him personally that "we will normalize relations, settle your debts, upgrade the embassy, and more, all immediately upon Sudan signing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement." (NOTE. Ismail was Sudan's foreign minister in 1997-2005. END NOTE.) He said EU states had made similar overtures, linking normalization to Sudanese counterterrorism efforts, CPA signing, elections, and improvement of relations with Sudan's neighbors. The Europeans, Ismail said, had "followed through, but the U.S. has not." He said Khartoum understood at the time that the Darfur issue had complicated matters and so agreed to further USG demands that Khartoum cooperate with

the process that led to the Abuja Agreement in 2006.

15. (C) Ismail said Khartoum continues to want improved relations with Washington and remains willing to tie progress on Darfur to normalization, saying "if we have to do anything, let us do it for the Americans." He said President Bashir would release U.S. embassy containers held by Sudanese Customs officials "as a gesture" as soon as the U.S. and Sudan reach a "framework of understanding," notwithstanding that his finance minister insists that the USG has a large duty arrearage that continues to accumulate at a rate of more than \$3,000 per month. Ismail said he had personally composed a paper for the Secretary outlining the elements of such a framework -- a road map on the way forward on Darfur, possible mediation of the efforts of the NCP and SPLM political committees on Abyei and other CPA issues, removal of Sudan from terrorism lists and at least some sanctions lists, and normalization more generally. He noted in particular that the terrorism listings greatly complicated Sudan's transfer of funds internationally and that the CIA has for six years certified Sudan's full cooperation on counterterrorism efforts.

16. (C) Ambassador Khalilzad agreed that developments in Darfur constrain the USG in its relations with Sudan, notwithstanding Khartoum's counterterrorism cooperation. He urged Ismail to have Sudan "do the things you say you are prepared to do, things that show a change on the ground," mentioning particularly the facilitation of UNAMID deployments. The Ambassador said that of course the U.S. would like to resolve the bilateral matter of the containers, but Sudan must realize that Darfur is the overriding concern. Khalilzad told Ismail that President Bashir should trust that the U.S. is not trying to "disintegrate Sudan." Khalilzad